

The National Standards for School Counseling Programs: A Partnership in Preparing Students for the New Millennium

By Carol A. Dahir

Aligning your school counseling program with national standards requires a rethinking of priorities, time, resources, and outcomes. This requires involving the entire school community to integrate the academic, career, and personal/social development of students into the mission of the school. How can principals and school counselors become partners on behalf of student success?

As schools drive curriculum change, improve instruction and learning, ensure that each student has an equitable opportunity for a quality education, and address accountability issues, it is essential they do not overlook a group of professionals who can have a positive impact on student success—a group of professionals who are neither teachers nor administrators; who can have a significant impact on the teaching and learning environment and help to create a school community that is positive and productive; a group of professionals—school counselors—who are trained to deliver a program that is part of the solution, not part of the problem.

Twenty years ago it was stated that school district administrators determine the role that school counselors play in helping students achieve the maximum benefit from the school experience (Costar 1978). More than 10 years ago, Boyer (1988) stated in his description of the school counselor:

Today, in most high schools, counselors are not only expected to advise students about college, they are also asked to police for drugs, keep records of dropouts, reduce

Carol A. Dahir (Caroldahir@aol.com) is National Standards Project Director for the American School Counselor Association in Alexandria, Va..

teenage pregnancy, check traffic in the halls, smooth out the tempers of irate parents, and give aid and comfort to battered and neglected children. School counselors are expected to do what our communities, our homes, and our churches have not been able to accomplish, and if they cannot, we condemn them for failing to fulfill our high-minded expectations (p. 3).

Have perceptions altered or do these scenarios continue to dominate the contemporary view of school counseling?

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) concur that the success of a school counseling program requires capitalizing on the training, expertise, and skill of school counselors to deliver a program that contributes significantly to the mission of the school and supports the expectations of the new standards and assessments. A new paradigm cannot take hold, however, without an understanding of the elements of a school counseling program and how school counseling programs promote student success.

School counselors are expected to do what our communities, our homes, and our churches have not been able to accomplish, and if they cannot, we condemn them for failing to fulfill our high-minded expectations.

Helping Students Reach Higher Expectations

The purpose of the school counseling program is to impart skills and facilitate learning opportunities in an active and preventive manner that ensures all students can achieve school success through academic, career, and personal/social development experiences. As specialists in child and adolescent development, school counselors coordinate the objectives, strategies, and activities of a comprehensive and developmental school counseling program to meet the personal, social, educational, and career development needs of all students. School counselors advocate for all students as they strive to meet the challenges and demands of the school system and prepare for transition to options after high school. School counselors call attention to situations in schools that are defeating or frustrating students and thereby hindering their success. School counseling programs empower students to overcome obstacles to school achievement and ensure access to appropriate services for students with varying individual needs (Wurtz 1995).

The development of national standards across the academic disciplines continues to direct educational practice: curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The principal orchestrates the process to ensure all students achieve at the standard of expectation. The successful implementation of programs in violence prevention, safe and drug-free schools, academic and

National Standards for School Counseling Programs

The national standards are statements of what students should know and be able to do as a result of participating in a school counseling program. The standards represent what a school counseling program should contain and serve as an organizational tool to identify and set priorities among the elements of an effective and accountable school counseling program. They serve as a framework for developing and writing a school counseling program that is comprehensive, individual schools in planning, local districts, and state departments; mental, and systemic. The national standards represent the minimum level of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that all students should have to do well in school. They serve as an organization tool to identify and set priorities among the elements of an effective and accountable school counseling program. They serve as a frame work for developing and writing a school counseling program that is comprehensive, individual schools in planning, local districts, and state departments; mental, and systemic. The national standards are statements of what students should know and be able to do to result of participating in a school counseling program. The standards represent what a school counseling program should contain and serve as an organizational tool to identify and set priorities among the elements of an effective and accountable school counseling program. They serve as a frame work for developing and writing a school counseling program that is comprehensive, individual schools in planning, local districts, and state departments; mental, and systemic. The national standards are statements of what students should know and be able to do to result of participating in a school counseling program. The standards represent what a school counseling program should contain and serve as an organizational tool to identify and set priorities among the elements of an effective and accountable school counseling program. They serve as a frame work for developing and writing a school counseling program that is comprehensive, individual schools in planning, local districts, and state departments; mental, and systemic.

The national standards are statements of what students should know and be able to do as a result of participating in a school counseling program.

- The national statement of standards for developing and writing a school counseling program and guide state departments, local districts, and individual schools in planning, implementing, and evaluating a school counseling program that is comprehensive, developmental, and systematic. The national statement of standards for school counseling is available at www.aacur.org.
 - Establish the school counseling program as an integral component of the mission of your school and be able to do so result of participation in a school counseling program.
 - Ensure equitable access to school counseling services for all students provided by a credentialed school counselor.
 - Identify the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that all students should acquire as a result of the K-12 school counseling program.

and be able to do as a result of participating in a school counseling

- gram

sure that the school counseling program is comprehensive in design and delivered in a systematic fashion to all students.

Ensure that the school counseling program is comprehensive in design and delivered in a systematic fashion to all students.

gram

in the provision of services to all students in our school for all students in the mission of learn. The school members of our church. Counselors of our school administrators, in conversations with our role of counsel.

- The nine national standards are based on the three widely accepted and interrelated areas of student development described in the couseful-
ng, educational literature, and research: academic, career, and
personal/social development.

The nine national standards are based on the three widely accepted and
interrelated areas of student development described in the couseful-
ng, educational literature, and research: academic, career, and
personal/social development.

The nine national standards in enhancing student learning.

Ensure that the school counseling program is comprehensive in design and delivered in a systematic fashion to all students.

gram

ic, career, and
ed in the counse-
widely accepted

- The nine national standards are based on the three widely accepted and interrelated areas of student development as described in the cou nseling, educational, and research academic career, and personal/social development.

Additionally, school counsellors responded that a lowered university acceptability research practices, would identify a focal point for practice, articulate a professional standard similar to the future would provide a centre for aspiration and momentum for the future, and establish similar goals, expectations, support systems, and resources for all students as a result of participating in school-based programs and define the vision and goals for the school counsellor role in the twenty-first century. The findings further delineated the functions of elementary, middle level, and high school counsellors.

important to include in national standards. ACT served as research consultant and coordinator for collecting information and donated personnel and resources to ensure the survey design, distribution, and data analysis fol-

- a. Examined the attitudes of citizens, students, and school counsellors toward the development of national standards for school level, and high school counsellors toward the purpose that standards would serve for school counsellor programs.
- b. Clarified the purpose that standards would meet the challenges and demands of the school system and prepare for transition to options after high school.
- c. Identified the program components that school counsellors believe should be contained in national standards.
- d. This research study clearly established that national standards were more than 1,100 ASCA school counsellor practices than those identified what they believed was important.

to meet the expectations of higher academic standards, school counselors and school counseling programs have assumed an increasingly complex role in contemporary education.

With this in mind, and in response to the educational reform agenda of GOALS 2000, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) aligned itself with the academic disciplines and developed the *National Standards for School Counseling Programs* to better define the role of U.S. schools counseling programs (Campbell and Dahir 1997). The research process

intendence intervention, school-to-career, school climate, character education, and access to postsecondary education requires the involvement of school counselors in a programme and systematic fashion. Successful implementation also requires the support and commitment of the principal, as partners with principals in the enormous challenge of preparing students

student learning. The three standards for career development serve as a guide to implementing strategies and activities that support and maximize a school counseling program. The three academic standards serve as a school students should know and be able to do as a result of participating in what students for school counseling programs are also statements of national standards for public statements of what students should know and be able to do as a result of participating in a school counseling program. The national standards are public statements of standards are public statements of what students should know and be able

Supporting Student Achievement

**comprehensive school
and accountable com-
menting an effective
developing and imple-
are the framework for
The national standards**

each school career, and personal/social development of students into the mission of the involvement of the entire school community to integrate academic program based on national standards necessitates part of the fabric of the school. A school counseling program that becomes systematic and collaborative model that becomes effective program. The national standards promote a management, coordination of services—consultation, case large and small-group guidance, group counseling, delivery lies in individual and group counseling, school counseling program. The model for a comprehensive standards are the content for a "guidance curriculum." The competencies are not a "guidance curriculum." The program. The national standards and the selected program. The national standards are the framework for developing and imple-

menting an effective and accountable comprehensive school counseling program. They provide guidance and direction for program design and should be adapted to local needs.

Standard C. Students will understand safety and survival skills.

Standard B. Students will make decisions, set goals, and take appropriate action to achieve goals.

Standard A. Students will interpret personal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.

Personal/Social Development

Standard C. Students will understand the relationship between per-

success and satisfaction.

Standard B. Students will employ strategies to achieve future career work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.

Standard A. Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of

to the world of work, and to life at home and in the community.

Standard C. Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work, and to life at home and in the community.

Standard B. Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide variety of substantial postsec-

Standard A. Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and

Academic Development

involvement of our society.

and ready to learn.

motivated, supported,

not just those who are

cess for all students,

counseling is on suc-

The emphases of school

- The standards for personal/social development**

as well as fostering understanding of the relationship between personal qualities, education and training, and the world of work.

employees to achieve future career success and job satisfaction

the world of work, and from job to job; career development includes edge that enable students to make a successful transition from school to

career to provide the foundation for acquiring skills, attitudes, and knowl-

edge that enable students to make a successful transition from school to

- The standards for career development** guide the school counseling pro-

life at home and in the community.

understanding the relationship of academics to the world of work, and to

throughout life; employing strategies to achieve success in school; and

knowledge, academic learning includes acquiring attitudes,

student learning. Academic development includes acquiring attitudes,

program to implement strategies and activities to support and maximize

student learning. Academic development includes acquiring attitudes,

program to implement strategies and activities to support and maximize

student learning. Academic development includes acquiring attitudes,

Author Note: Vision into Action Implementing the National Curriculum Standards for School Counseling Programs (November 1998) is the companion workbook to Shaping the Vision: The National Standards for School Counseling (published by ASCA in fall 1997). Publication sales have exceeded 15,000 copies and 100,000 Executive Summaries are in the hands of counselors and educators nationwide. The National Standards for School Counseling Programs continue to affect state education departments in the design, implementation, and evaluation of a school council model that is comprehensive, systemic, and affects all students. In the fall 1998, the implementation process continues to affect state education agencies, school systems, and individual counselors in the design, implementation, and evaluation of a school council model that is comprehensive, systemic, and affects all students.

The goal of education is to produce a community of learners and workers who can successfully and effectively contribute to society.

The goal of education is to produce a community of learners and workers who can successfully and effectively contribute to society. Student success

Vision for Students = Commitment to School Counseling

Accountability is the key to determining the effectiveness of a school counseling program and its impact on student performance. The nine national standards by themselves are not intended to be "measurable performance objectives". The competencies, either the representative list or locally derived, are the basis for developing measurable indicators of student progress and for evaluating a school's program. Decisions at the building and system levels will determine the degree to which students have acquired the skills and knowledge as defined by the standards. Thus, evaluation becomes the reality check. It answers the question "What progress have your students made in realizing your vision of student achievement?" Program effectiveness is determined by student performance. Activities are designed to support specific competencies. Evaluation is based on the national standards as they learn from mistakes and adjust the program.

Program making a difference? Evaluating a program helps principals assess their school counselor's progress toward student achievement of the national standards as they learn from mistakes and adjust the program. Measurable success resulting from this effort can be documented by increased number of students completing school with essential preparation, the career awareness, and the personal/social growth an increased number of students completing school with the academic college. Most important, as the principal, you can convey these successes to students, parents, teachers, district administration, and the community and demonstrate tangible evidence by using data to illustrate your program's impact on students.

guide to providing the foundation for acquiring the attitudes, skills, and knowledge that enable students to make a successful transition from school to the world of work. The three personal/social development standards provide the foundation for personal and social growth that contributes to academic and career success. A national standards-based school counseling program supports students as they strive to achieve academic success, plan for their futures, and develop into contributing members of the world of the

How Effective Is It? School-Based Management:

By Bruce Robert Brown and G. Robb Cooper

Educators and policymakers are faced with the daunting task of proving education services to children being raised in the most rapidly evolving society in human history. The task before the schools is to find methods by which they can improve their effectiveness, while better serving their stakeholders. Is school-based management perceived to be an effective approach?

A explosion of new knowledge, mounting demands for accountability, and the proliferation of educational choices put greater pressure on our public educational systems. The task before the schools is to find methods to improve their effectiveness while serving their stakeholders better.

One of the most prevalent of these approaches, which has been building momentum since the 1980s, has been school-based (or site-based) management (SBM). School reformers believe SBM is an approach that increases school effectiveness and creates a more highly involved staff and community (Purkey and Smith 1985; Whiston and Odden 1990). How is this model being perceived by the people most closely associated with the reform: parents, teachers and administrators?

Bruce Robert Brown (bbrrown@sd74.k12.il.us) is principal of Lincoln Hall Middle School in Lincolnwood, Ill., and G. Robb Cooper (profcop@aoi.com) is associate professor at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb.

large school systems throughout the country, and major national consulting organizations, school counselor associations in the states, small and large school systems throughout the country, and major national consulting and/or educational associations such as ACT, American Counseling Association, Association of Curriculum and Instructional Developers and Supervisors, Association of Elementary School Principals, National Career Development Association, National Council, National PTA, National Occupational Information Coordinating Board, National Secondary School Principals, National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Board of Certification of Educators, College Board, Education Trust, National Career and Technical Education, College Curriculum Development, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Association for Counseling and National Tech Prep Network, and National Association of College Admissions Counseling.

For more information about either of the National Standards public consultation or to request complimentary Executive Summaries for your school counselors, to request complimentary Executive Summaries for your school counselors, or to find out more about the National Standards implementation model, call the American School Counselor Association at (800) 306-4722. To order the National Standards publications call (800) 401-2404.^a

- References**
- Boyer, E. 1988. Exploring the future: Seeking new challenges. *Journal of College Admissions* 118: 2-8.
- Coster, J. 1978. The relationship of counselors to school principals. *The status of guidance and counseling in the nation's schools: A series of issue papers*. Washington, D.C.: The American Personnel and Guidance Association.
- Campbell, C., and G. Dahut. 1997. Shaping the nation: The national standards for school counseling programs. Alexandria, Va.: American School Counselor Association.
- Gyssbers, N. 1990. *Comprehensive guidance programs that work*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: ERIC/CAPS.
- Gyssbers, N., and P. Henderson. 1988. *Developing and managing your school guidance program*. Alexandria, Va.: American Association for Counseling and Development.
- Whiston, E. 1995. Telephone conversation. National Education Goals Panel.